

MAJOR ACQUISITION PROGRAMS

Ground Combat Element Programs

Part 2



M249 Squad Automatic Weapon

Description

The M249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) program seeks to replace the current inventory of SAWs with new, upgraded ones. The SAW was fielded in 1985 and replaced the M16A1 rifle as the automatic rifle in the Marine fire team and rifle squad. It remains a critical source of firepower for Marine Corps units executing ground combat missions.

Operational Impact

Acquisition of the SAW, a true light-weight machinegun, significantly increased the firepower of the basic Marine Corps ground combat unit, the four-Marine fire team. The service life of the currently fielded SAW has been exceeded. If this inventory is not replaced, tangible combat power of Marine ground units will degrade, which will directly affect the Marine Corps' ability to meet both operational and maintenance readiness. Modifications to the original design incorporate years of field experience, ensuring that this acquisition adds technological advances in addition to



reliability improvements for Marines executing ground combat missions.

Program Status

The Marine Corps is working with the U.S. Army within an existing SAW procurement contract.

Procurement Profile: FY 05 FY 06

Quantity: 447 478

Developer/Manufacturer

FN Manufacturing, Inc., Columbia, SC